

Mixed Results For England

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There were mixed results for the English players on Thursday morning although Liam Pitchford again despatched a higher-rated opponent. In the Under 21 Singles Patrick Franciska (Germany) (World ranked no. 383) held no fears for the inform Chesterfield 16 year-old who ran out a 11-8, 5-11, 11-5, 12-10 winner to qualify for the Main Competition.

Andrew Baggaley, England's second highest World ranked male player at no. 194 despite not being a regular member of the National squad looked sharp. Raj Mondal (India) (ranked no. 870) was despatched in double quick-time 11-4, 11-4, 11-5, 11-9. Andrew returned to the table to book his place in the Competition Proper by beating Jakob Asmussen (Denmark) (no. 308) decisively 11-7, 11-9, 9-11, 11-4, 11-2.

England no. two Darius Knight had a game he will wish to forget. Little went right for him in a fast and furious topspin battle against 198th ranked Stefano Tomasi (Italy) and Darius slumped to a disappointing 5-11, 7-11 8-11, 4-11 defeat.

England no. three Danny Reed faced Daniel Gorak (who has been hovering around the World top 100 mark for a while) in the Mens Singles and on this occasion it was the Polish player who held all the answers. Gorak gave a faultless display as he powered through 11-7, 11-6, 11-7, 11-6. There was little luck for Danny in the Under 21 Singles either and here he lost to the lower ranked Swede – Harald Andersson (World ranked no. 561) 9-11, 11-3, 7-11, 9-11.

Scotland's top player Gavin Runggay fared better and the four times Liverpool Grand Prix Mens Singles Champion will be delighted with his display. Well supported by a close-knit Scottish squad he qualified for the Main Draw of the Mens Singles after beating World no. 240 Benjamin Rogiers (Belgium) impressively 11-8, 7-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-5.

Welsh legend Ryan Jenkins also faced a Belgian opponent in the shape of up-and-coming Yannick Vostes (ranked no. 219) and Ryan found himself well beaten. Vostes made no mistake winning comfortably 11-6, 11-6, 11-7, 11-5.

Image: Darius Knight and coach Jia Yi Liu, courtesy tabletennisphotos.com.

Steve Kerns

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